

## **ABSTRACT**

A morphine component, e.g., a concentrate of poppy straw, is converted into codeine in high yield and high purity and in a highly controlled manner. The conversion process involves the following steps: (a) providing a solution or suspension of a morphine component in an inert solvent or a mixture of solvents; (b) methylating the resultant solution or suspension with a methylating agent in the presence of an alkaline ingredient; and (c) recovering the resultant codeine as the free base or as a salt.